(b) how it is maintained for grass lawns and other vegetations and under which authority;

(c) the expenditure incurred thereon, per annum; and

(d) how much of it has been encroached upon or is otherwise misused?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND THE MINISTER OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) The total area under green belt at North Avenue & South Avenue is 11.75 acres (North Avenue 5.63 acres & South Avenue 6.12 acres). The area between Vasant Vihar and Vasant Kunj is 315 hectares, out of which 140 hectares is reserved for recreational purposes which is 44% of the total area.

(b) Lawns in North Avenue & South Avenue are maintained by CPWD while the area between Vasant Kunj and Vasant Vihar is maintained by DDA. Such areas are maintained through regular planting of trees/shrubs etc. and developing fresh open spaces. This is a continuous process.

(c) Average annual expenditure on North Avenue & South Avenue is Rs. 8 lakhs and between Vasant Kunj and Vaant Vihar is Rs. 3.85 lakhs.

(d) There is no unauthorised encroachment on the North Avenue and South Avenue lawns except a small portion in the back of 185, South Avenue used as kitchen garden. Between Vasant Kunj and Vasant Vihar, there is an encroachment of Jhuggi clusters in approximately 60 hectares of land at Kusumpur Pahari located between Vasant Vihar and Vasant Kunj.

Development of Urban Infrastructure and Real Estate

610. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to open up the urban infrastructure and real estate development to foreign investment, as reported in the Economic Times, dated 16th October, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating in percentage upto what extent foreign investment would be allowed;

(c) whether HDFC has entered into any Join-venture agreement with some foreign company; and

(d) whether Government propose to allow NRIs to invest in real estates in the country?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND THE MINISTER OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) and (b) Foreign investment in urban infrastructure and real estate development in India is open to the NRIs/PIO & OCBs. The present policy, however, does not cover foreign direct investment in these sectors. In the recently organised Government Industry Meet in October, 1997 representatives from various industries advocated for opening up Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in housing, real estate and infrastructure sector.

Pursuant to the recommendations of the Meet, a committee has been constituted comprising representatives from the Government as well as Industry to examine the issues relating to private/corporate investments in urban infrastructure. One of the task before the Committee is to consider the issue of opening Foreign Direct Investment in urban infrastructure sector.

Pending the final position recommendations of the Committee, it is not possible to say whether and upto what extent foreign direct investment would be considered.

(c) As reported by Foreign Investment Promotion Board, Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) and Government of Singapore Investment Corporation (GIC) propose to form a Special Purpose Investment Vehicle to

invest in Urban Infrastructure projects in India.

(d) Government has already allowed NRIs to invest in housing and real estate development sector. As per the existing Scheme formulated by the Government only Non-residents of Indian nationality/ origin and overseas corporate bodies (OCBs) prodeninently owned by Non-residents of Indian nationality/origin are allowed to invest in this sector.

Welfare Schemes for Minorities in Bihar

611. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) Welfare Schemes/programmes being implemented by Government in Bihar for minorities of the State;

(b) funds allocated for such schemes/ programmes during the last three years, year-wise and scheme/programme-wise; and

(c) the steps Government have taken to ensure that the benefits reach the target groups in the State?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) to (c) Following Schemes are being implemented for the Welfare of Minorities through out the country including the State of Bihar.

(i) Pre-examination Coaching Scheme for Weaker Sections based on economic criteria is being implemented through reputed coaching institutions. The grants are released on the recommendation of State Governments.

(ii) Multi-Sectoral Development Plan Scheme is being implemented in 41 minority concentration districts through out the country. In the State of Bihar there are 3 such districts viz. Purnea, Katihar & Darbhanga.

(iii) The Scheme of National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMFDC) is being implemented through State Channelising Agencies. The channelising Agency for the State of Bihar is the Bihar State Minorities Finance Corporation. An amount of Rs. 128.96 lakhs have been released on 3.7.97 to the State Channelising agency of Bihar.

(iv) Area Intensive Programme for Educationally Backward Minorities. The scheme operates in 331 Minority concentration blocks/tehsils as identified by the Ministry of Welfare on the basis of 1981 census. Out of a total of 331 minority concerntration blocks, 85 blocks are in Bihar where the scheme of Area Intensive Programme for Educationally Backward Minorities is applicable. Under the scheme, no proposal has been received from the State Govt. of Bihar during the last 3 years and thus no grants could be released.

(v) Scheme of Modernisation of Madarasa Education. Amounts disbursed under the above schemes during last 3 years are indicated in statement given below.

All these schemes are being monitored by the State Government.